

LET'S EXPLORE--

West Jersey's State Parks



Abandoned slate quarry near Newton. Water in pit, a deep aqua green color, now is favorite swimming spot for small boys.

Staff Photos, Dorer

BY JOHN T. CUNNINGHAM

A DAY in the country! That should mean to any one West Jersey—where mountains, lakes, broad fields, forests and farms spread in profusion, where the desperate pace of the through highways gives way to the peacefulness of rural byways.

Scenery alone is not enough: The traditional day in the country is rounded out by a bit of fishing, a cool swim, exploration of mountain trails or a nap under tall cedars. There's a route through Sussex and Warren counties where any or all of these pastimes can be enjoyed—without irritating a single farmer and without sprinting from a charging bull. Three of the state's lesser known parks—Stephens, Swartswood and Jenny Jump—can be touched in a 90-mile run starting and ending at Netcong. Any would be worth a stop.

NEWARK SUNDAY NEWS

Stephens State Park, near Hackettstown, will supply the fishing and picnicking. Swartswood, near Newton, adds swimming and boating to the list and Jenny Jump, near Hope, gives the hiker the chance to climb rugged slopes. Just for good measure, the area also includes the State Fish Hatchery at Hackettstown and a pleasantly different Sunday afternoon can be spent there. What more could any one ask?

The way from Netcong to Hackettstown by way of Waterloo, Saxton Falls and Stephens State Park, an off-the-beaten-trail route, is much more intriguing than heavily traveled Route 6. Two miles north of Netcong turn left off Route 31 where signs point the way to Waterloo. The road follows closely the twisting Musconetcong River. Then, as the river broadens into a quiet pond covered

with lily pads a left turn is made on a narrow dirt road for a visit to nearly deserted Waterloo.

ONCE Waterloo was a transportation center for much of West Jersey. Railroads intersected near the village and the Morris Canal made Waterloo an important stop. Its decline closely followed the demise of the iron industry in New Jersey and today Waterloo slumbers quietly. Behind Smith's Store, which dominates a corner in the village, a fairly well-preserved portion of the canal can be seen. Some ruins still remain of Waterloo Foundry, named for the victory of Wellington over Napoleon. The town is said to have gotten its name from the foundry.

The dirt road continues through Waterloo and rejoins the main road. High up in the mountain to the right

are ruins of "French's Folly," an industrial dream which never came true. In 1853 James French, a native of Hoboken, built a mill which for 50 years manufactured such varied commodities as Brussels carpet and fenders for canal barges. Shortly after 1900 French left and the mill soon tumbled. Stone houses built for mill bosses and workers were left vacant and are there yet, roofless and collapsing.

At Saxton Falls, where the river was dammed to provide storage water for the Morris Canal, filled-in canal locks make a picnic spot. Water from Lake Hopatcong and Cranberry Lake was stored here to feed the canal for its long haul to the Delaware River.

Stephens State Park, just beyond, has a tricky entrance. Traffic through the park is one way and after the exit

(Continued on Following Page)

AUGUST 22, 1948

11



Luncheon site—filled-in canal lock at Saxton Falls where Musconetcong River was dammed to supply storage water for Morris Canal.



Neatness of stone walls and gracefulness of stone archways suggest abandoned castle rather than abandoned factory at White Pond.



Typical buildings erected by Moravians in Hope in Colonial days. Building on right, now a bank, was the Moravian Church until 1808.



Swimming at Emmons Grove in Swartswood State Park

RURAL BYWAYS OFFER MUCH

(Continued from Preceding Page)

is passed, the entrance is about a half-mile ahead on the left.

ESTABLISHED in 1937 after a gift of 237 acres from Marsena P. and Augustus W. Stephens, the park lies on both sides of the Musconetcong River and has three picnic areas. Fishing is permitted, except in one reserved section, but the appeal of Stephens will be mainly to persons seeking a restful picnic spot along a cool, rapidly flowing stream. In the center of the park, near the river, is a six-foot stone memorial to the late

annually hatches nearly 1,000,000 fish, about half of which are released for fishermen each year.

Returning to Hackettstown from the hatchery, the roads pass 81-year-old Centenary Junior College, one of the state's outstanding schools for girls. Then, in Hackettstown, take High street at the traffic light for a stimulating ride to Newton and eventually Swartswood Lake. The road rises sharply past Hackettstown and an excellent view of the valley is offered from a hilltop about two miles out of the town.

Broad fields give way to thick woodlands, then, to the right, a quiet lake fringed with evergreens appears. Beyond, the hills rise and fall suddenly, giving glimpses of rolling Sussex countryside. One of the best views is offered just after the pond is past, with mountains rising to the left and the valley falling away to the right. Tranquility Church — and Tranquility is an apt name for this secluded spot — marks a left turn to the village of Tranquility and the ridge road to Newton.



Memorial to a sportsman.

Art Neu, "conservationist, sportsman, casting champion," erected in 1943 by "fellow sportsmen" after Mr. Neu's death in 1941.

A visit to the state fish hatcheries at Hackettstown can highlight any day. Signs point the way to the grounds, open every day, and visitors are permitted free access to the pools. Fish range upward in size from tiny trout which unceasingly (and instinctively) throw themselves into the swiftly flowing water as it drops into the pools. Other pools reveal unbelievably large trout moving slowly through the water. The hatchery

AT the crossroads in Greendell, continue straight through for splendid scenery all the way to Huntsburg. The road is dirt and stone and tends to be somewhat dusty after a long dry spell but the scenic advantages offset minor driving discomforts. This is rural Sussex at its best. The road follows the ever-changing contours of the Sussex hills and each twist offers a better glance off through the valley. The dirt road intersects with macadam eventually and a right turn carries to Newton.

From Huntsburg to Newton the trip is along the top of a ridge and off to the right spreading peach orchards extend down into the valley. Far out to the right hills rise sharply in separate mounds, giving somewhat the appearance of great round stones under a spreading green carpet. Slate outcroppings are visible along the road to the left as Newton is neared before a water-filled abandoned slate quarry looms on the left.



which also offers picnicking, boating and fishing.

IN WAY OF PICNIC SPOTS

Light reflected from the aqua green water dances in shimmering patterns on the slate ledges rising upward nearly 125 feet from the bottom. The American penchant for initials in public places has reached even to the quarry, under difficulties not usually encountered: Solid walls 50 feet above the water, apparently inaccessible, have names chiseled into the slate. The quarry is abandoned except for the small boys who in the Summer-time dive from rock ledges into the cool pit.

The road drops down into Newton, past the front of the 101-year-old Court House with its distinctive white pillars. The Sussex County seat is cleared by a left turn just past the Court House, another left at the intersection a half block away, then a third left turn off the concrete at Don Bosco Seminary. The road bisects pretty Paulins Kill Lake, fringed with pleasant cottages, and continues up another steep hill toward Swartswood Lake.

SWARTSWOOD is one of the earliest of the state parks. The entire 519-acre lake is included in the park, although only one large state-owned section fronts on the lake. This is at Emmans Grove of the northeast corner, where boating, swimming, fishing and picnicking are available. Land adjacent to the grove has recently been purchased and development will increase public lake front ownership to nearly a mile.

Swartswood is said to have taken its name from Capt. Anthony Swartwout, a British officer who had incurred the enmity of Indians during the French and Indian War. In 1756 a band of Indians raided the Swartwout home near the lake during which Mrs. Swartwout and four of their children were killed. The captain was later slain but one of Swartwout's daughters, adopted by the Indians, grew up to marry a chief, while a son, also cared for by the Indians, returned briefly to the settlement as a man, then disappeared into the woods. Southward from the lake the road

to the left is taken at the first intersection then a right turn is made at the next corner for Stillwater. In the center of the village a flour mill continues a 181-year history. The mill, built in 1767, was burned in 1840 but the present mill was built on the old foundation in 1844. During the Revolution flour made in the mill was floated down the Paulins Kill River in specially built flatboats to the Delaware River and eventually to Philadelphia for Colonial troops.

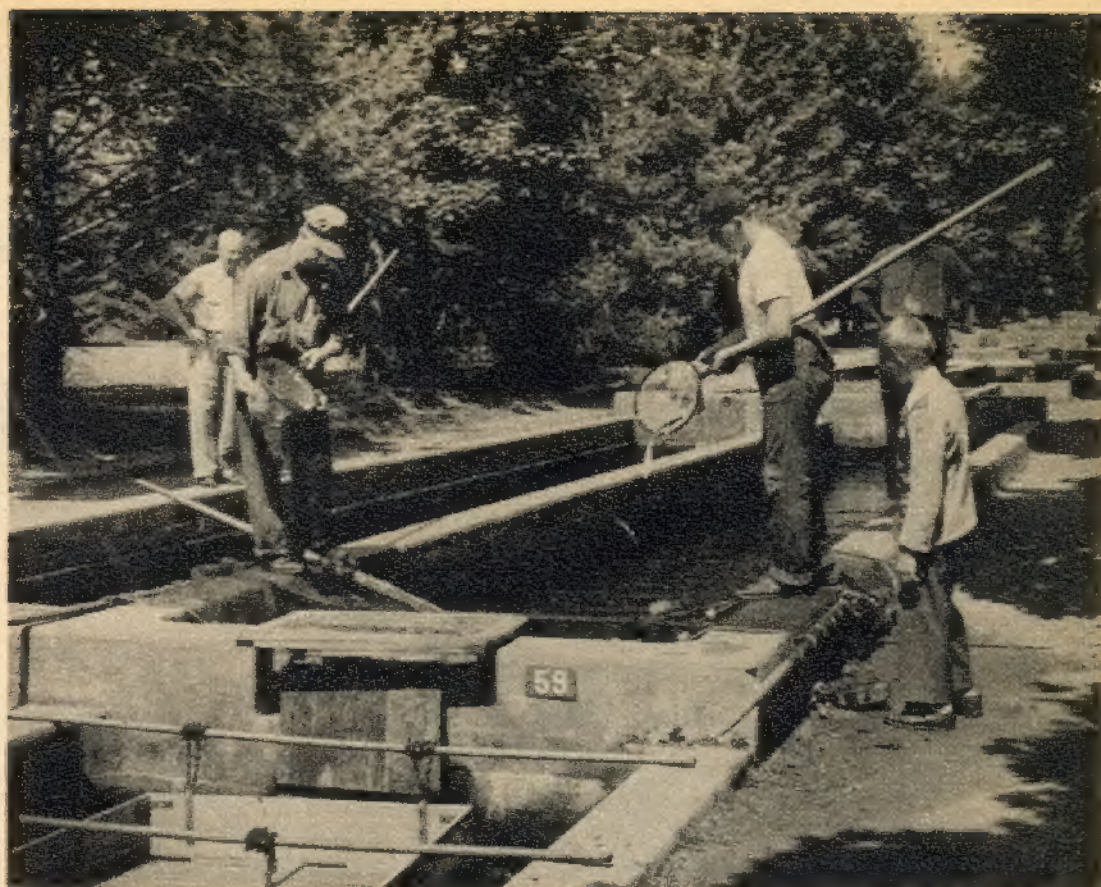
A few miles past Stillwater on the road to Blaiirstown, White Pond, with its sparkling shores glistening in the sun, appears on the left. Across the lake are the ruins of a factory which in 1903 attempted to capitalize on the millions of tiny white shells spread over the lake bottom and along the shores.

THE factory, nearly 200 feet long and about 100 feet wide, looks like the remains of a castle. Broad windows and gracefully arched doors are in the walls which are still standing. Rusting machinery spreads through the building. Local residents say the factory was built to use the white shells in manufacturing either cement or limestone. The enterprise failed and after experimental use the building was never used except for ice storage for a while.

Blaiirstown, noted for Blair Academy and as a center for Summer resorts in Warren and Sussex counties, is like something out of the 19th Century, with its main streets lined by stores over which balconies extend out to the street. The town, originally called Gravel Hill, took its present name from John I. Blair, railroad builder and industrialist, who built the first railroad to the village in 1876. He also established Blair Academy 100 years ago.

The back road from Blaiirstown to Hope is one of the state's most unusual scenic routes. Follow signs to Cedar Lake and Lake Susquehanna.

(Continued on Following Page)



Employees counting small fish at state hatchery in Hackettstown, open every day, where visitors can inspect the work being done.



Old mill at Stillwater, the history of which goes back to 1767. It supplied flour to Colonial troops during the War for Independence.

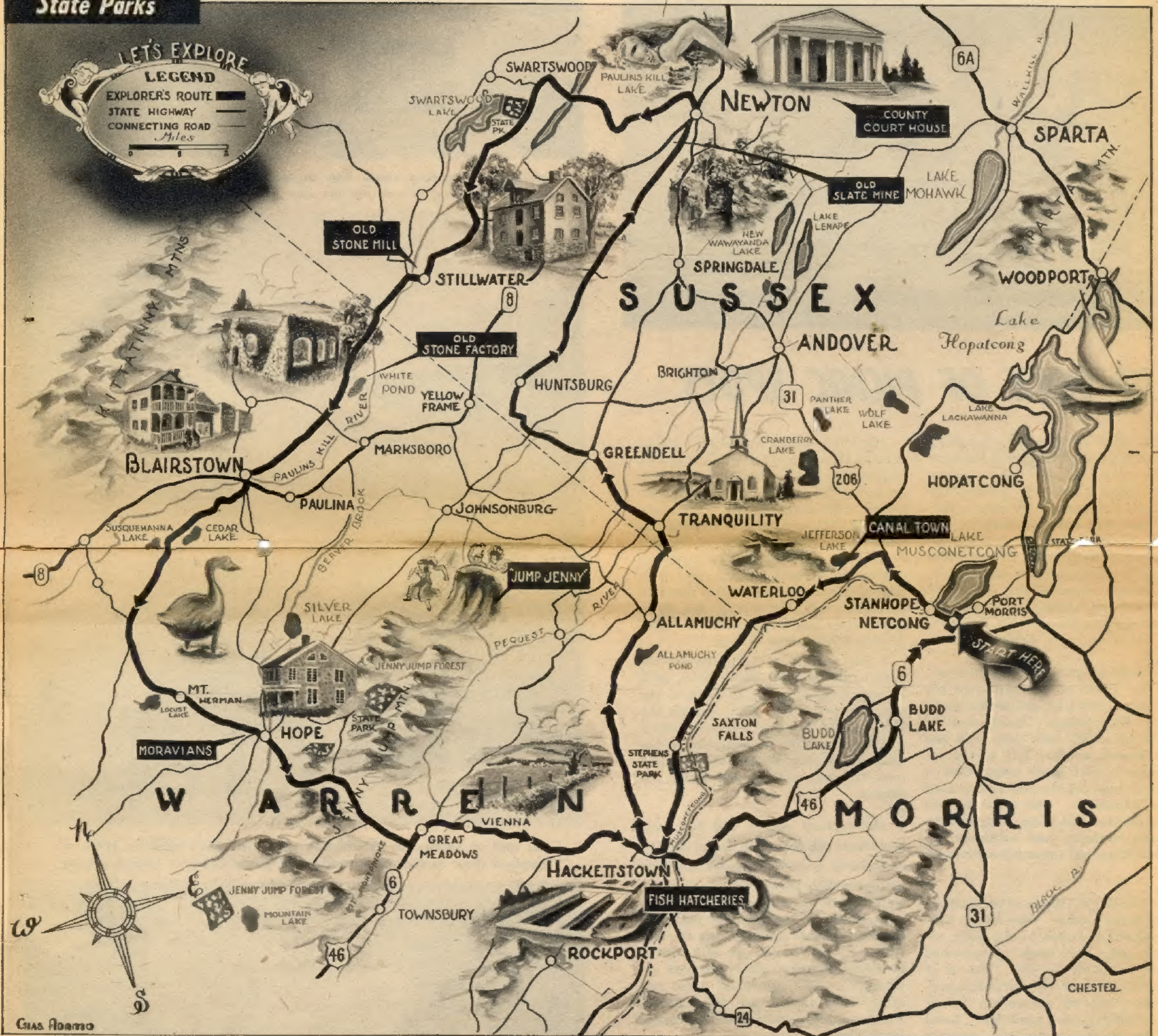


Main street of Blaiirstown, Summer resort center, has 19th Century look with small stores and overhanging balconies lining sidewalks.

LET'S EXPLORE--
West Jersey's
State Parks



Scene on Lake Susquehanna near Blairstown with Kittatinny range on horizon. BELOW: Map of tour covering Morris, Sussex, Warren Counties



(Continued from Preceding Page)

Cedar Lake appears first on the left, almost hidden by trees, then the road curves close by Lake Susquehanna, offering long views across the water. The valley is left behind as the road crosses under a railroad bridge and climbs quickly to peaks which permit the eye to roam as far as the Delaware River. The Delaware Water Gap is clearly visible and the whole sweep of the Kittatinny Mountain range rises magnificently in the distance.

The next left turn continues to Hope, the solid village built by the Moravians in 1774. Substantial

houses, inns, public buildings and a church built of native stone have stood the test of nearly two centuries. The Moravian Church, built in 1781, was occupied as a meeting house until 1808. Then the Moravians, crippled and weakened by a smallpox epidemic, left Warren County. Today the church is the village bank. Interestingly enough, the Moravians, who were driven out 140 years ago by sickness, have returned this Summer to the Hope area to establish a children's camp.

DOWN the hill from the center of Hope the road crosses a stone viaduct built by the Moravians and to the left

is the imposing stone mill, built in 1768. Across from the mill the road to the right is taken for the climb to Jenny Jump State Forest, a 1,107-acre preserve established in 1931. The origin of the "Jenny Jump" name is obvious, if legendary. It is said a settler on the mountain saw Indians creeping up on his daughter Jenny as she picked berries on the edge of a precipice. He cried: "Jump! Jenny, Jump!" And Jenny jumped.

Jenny Jump is one of the lesser known state forests, partially because the roads entering the park are not in as good condition as they are at other parks. However, the forest offers good hiking trails and the reward

comes in vistas ranging from the Great Meadows muck lands immediately below to High Point monument and Delaware Water Gap in the distance. Jenny Jump includes camp sites, camp shelters and picnic groves. The entrance to the park is marked only by a small sign and the traveler must watch closely to his left to see it at all.

Downward from Jenny Jump Mountain the road passes the thousands of acres of rich black soil where onions, lettuce, celery and other garden crops grow profusely, then reaches an intersection with Route 6 where a left turn is made for Vienna, Hackettstown and eventually Netcong.